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House and Field Crickets

The chirping songs of the crickets are among the most pleasant sounds of summer and fall. There are many different kinds of crickets. Not all of them can produce sound, but when they do, it is the adult male that produces sound by rubbing his wings together. The male cricket uses sound to attract females, or sometimes to sound an alarm when he is disturbed.

In some Asian countries crickets are kept in small cages in homes where they are prized for their cheerful songs. However, when crickets enter buildings uninvited, many people find those pleasant sounds annoying, and sometimes, crickets can damage a wide variety of materials. The information presented here will help you understand more about why and how crickets move indoors and how you can best prevent that from happening.



House Cricket Photo Source: Golden Bear Pest Control, Inc.

Many crickets are attracted to areas where the moisture level is high and stable. They often move inside accidentally when a door or window is left open or sometimes in the fall when the temperature gets cooler.

All crickets have chewing mouthparts. Usually they feed on decaying leaves, living plants, or even on other insects. Indoors, crickets can feed on fabrics, leather, and fur, and are especially likely to feed on items soiled with food, beverages or perspiration. They feed on the surface of fabrics, such as cottons, silks or wools,

leaving roughened areas caused by their picking and pulling to loosen fibers. Two common crickets that occasionally become pests are the house and field crickets.

Description. Both the house and field crickets have slender antennae that are longer than their bodies. They have large hind legs to help them jump. Their legs have short, sharp spines on them. Females and males have long antenna-like feeler at the end of their body and females also have an egg-laying guide. The adults and their young look alike, except the young are smaller and have no wings. House crickets are one inch or less in length and hold their wings flat over their backs. They are yellowish-brown in color with three dark stripes on the head. Field crickets are variable in size ranging from ½ inch to over one inch. Many are black, but some are varying shades of brown.



Field Cricket. Photo Source: Golden Bear Pest Control, Inc.

Habits and Habitat. House crickets can spend their whole lives inside buildings. They are usually found in warm areas where they can get enough moisture and food. Inside the safety of a building they can lay many eggs. In the winter they are often found near fireplaces, kitchens, water heaters, and furnace areas, but they may be found anywhere inside a structure.

Field crickets usually are found in fields, pastures, and meadows, and can sometimes become agricultural pests. Field crickets are less likely to occur in large numbers inside because they lay their eggs in the soil.

Usually, they are only an occasional invader. Outdoors both house and field crickets are often found in moist areas such as mulch, tall grass and weeds. Rock, brick and wood piles are also attractive to them. Both kinds of crickets are more active at night and may be attracted to light.

Non-chemical Control. The most important step to take for successful control is to reduce or eliminate the habitats that make it possible for the crickets to survive. These are areas that can stay moist most of the time. Mow tall grass and weed flower beds near the structure. Pay closer attention to areas around entry points like doors, or directly below windows, or vents. Keep heavily mulched areas away from the foundation, if possible. Stack wood off the ground, or even better, move wood piles away from the structure to eliminate habitats. Prevent trash cans from contacting the ground too. Crickets like to hide underneath them. Reduce lighting around doors and windows, or use yellow or sodium vapor lights that will be less attractive. Screening can be a good tool to prevent crickets from entering the house if kept in good condition.

Indoors, vacuuming can remove crickets. Throw the vacuum bag away outside when you are finished. Glue or sticky traps placed around entry points may also be helpful.

Chemical Control. Use chemicals for indoor control only when a large infestation is present. In those cases, only apply the chemical to cracks and crevices paying special attention to possible entry points around doors and windows. With house crickets, treating attic areas sometimes may be necessary. Crawl spaces, garages, and basements may need a treatment too. Limit out door treatments to the perimeter of the structure. If treating mulch,

decaying leaves or other thick material, make sure you get the chemical to go down deep where the crickets will be hiding. As with non-chemical methods of control, pay close attention to areas around entry points such as doors, below windows and close to vents.

Select insecticide products for cricket control that are labeled for the site you want to treat. Some insecticides perform better on some surfaces than others. Don't use insecticides labeled for outdoor use, indoors. Always read and follow label instructions.

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